

Hesitating girl, whenever you go to your father¹, thou body remember, thy distressed heart, thou protect the time². Should thou infinite love scorch our bodies.

Can you hear well the hell's melody of the prisoner's still living body you left behind in your path to die as prey of the beast?

How many people disappeared without even trying to escape from this birdcage...

That one, having either that perfect smiling face and refreshing movements yet thou even having calm in high esteem even if you get close to him do not touch him. That one, having the face of an angel has become a guide to the bottom of the abyss.

Dance and sing the dance of the paradise, there's no spell to escape from those eyes.

Chapter 1

Roman Holyday

-Hey girl! Let me see that blouse. That skirt from there too. I'm asking for the laced pannier. By the way, size S... ah! You! What a cutie. How about going to eat now?

-Hah? Eh? Well...eh?

The voice of the laced and frilly dressed young-looking shop assistant came confused. Where the hell this man did come from? The about two meter tall dark faced man who was returning her gaze with those eyes in a daze, moreover, a loose looking giant garbed in priest clothes. His fur chest visible and stinking of masculinity was the one talking so familiarly from the yellow colored door of the girl's clothes boutique to the shop assistant.

-Truth is that I know of a place near the pantheon where you can eat a delicious steak. I'll make a reserve.

-Leon, what are you doing while making somebody else carry the bags all by himself?

A reproaching sweet voice interrupted the giant picking on the girl without even looking

¹ This could both be go to your father or remember your father.

² Literal translation is this but in some old literary context could also be to cherish or remember

at his face. Where did this one come too? The complaint came from another priest dressed one with a sad sleepy-looking eyes behind his round shaped glasses holding all by himself an enormous baggage with both hands.

-You told me you wanted to buy a souvenir for your daughter and requested to meet in the middle of this cold, right? If you have already finished buying let's get back to the priest dorm.

-Shut up you idiot! When trying to get the name of a lady, like I care with the problems of those flea-like, don't mess with other people's love path.

The gigantic father Leon Garcia calmly spited and turned with a look of having lost the game while forcibly pulling a big paper bag in his head with a grunt.

-Besides, now we're going to Milan, the best place for a date with a woman. Isn't man's knowledge there are plenty of things perfect for a gal?

-Society calls the girls who fall for this having "daddy issues" for a reason³... Fana, she is around fourteen right? Expensive brands and such have still no meaning to her.

The silver haired father pulled out from his head the paper bag and watched down with a resentment sigh. Abel Nightroad sucked with misery his dripping nose.

Inside the fancy paper bag where a toy-looking set of cosmetics, and some heavily packaged tools for playing house.

There were still two weeks until Christmas and even for Santa Claus this much goods where enough.

-Let's get back now, tonight we have the express to Milan right? If we don't finish punctually the cleaning here Catalina is going to scold us both.

-...tsk, whatever.

Like a crybaby hearing the name of his demonic boss the giant finally released the shop girl's hand.

³ It's completely impossible to translate this particular phrase since it uses a saying only existing in Japanese; I searched for the expression with most similar meaning in English that I know.

The also known as “Iron woman” the Cardinal Catalina Sforza, chief of small operations, actually returning home. By thinking in returning to Milan whether like it or not they matched a resigned face. Reluctantly watched the piled mountain of paper bags filled with presents.

-What are we going to do; the sweet Fana will have to settle with this.

-If you could only carry this. And apart from that, this girl would be very happy if you stopped doing this daddy face of yours.

With the anticipation face of doing the right thing the silver haired father put down both hands and left the big luggage in the floor. Before a blink, without doubting the entire enormous luggage in the floor was in Leon's arm.

-...hey hey! You okay?

With a calm voice said the giant, while passing his other arm right to the neck and picked him by the collar. In this way with Abel on the verge of death by suffocation fell back and clashed with a figure behind.

-Little lady, don't you know it's dangerous to run around by these parts? You didn't hurt yourself, right?

-Ouch! Aix aix...

Before them was a beret wearing black haired girl was moaning while rubbing at her waist. When clashed she had felt back. Her green pupils behind large glasses where moist with tears. But when she saw the giant who was paying at the shop glaring at her she froze.

-You beast! Where are you looking at?! Getting in the middle with this big body of yours... be careful!!!

-Wow wow, that's not right milady, who is the one who bumped into others?!

The flower bed pale faced half death pal of the giant shrug Leon's strong shoulder. Probably some foreign rich family's daughter on a pleasure trip by Rome, with such a superior complex smile on her young looking face around early teens.

-Leaving that, I don't know what the rush is for but you should be careful when running here around or else you could get hurt.

-Huh! That's some unnecessary care; advice coming from servant looking punks like you is... Ah!

The little girl's loathsome small face got twisted and she started rubbing on her ankle with a painful look.

-Ouch... my foot...

-Look, didn't I tell you?

Leon shove aside his colleague in a near death experience and knelt besides the girl while his partner screamed when found himself in the air then with a hand the size of a balloon started to massage the girl's leg.

-The bone is not broken, just a little twist... have a bit of patience, I'll get you to the hospital.

-The... the hospital?

Just by hearing this the face of the girl got pale.

-I... I don't need this unnecessary waste of time! Even not going to the hospital, come! Help me get up... ouch ouch!!!

-Hey hey! This is no good at all

Leon quickly helped the blunt girl who twisted her lips and left a short scream when fall again. With a look of bothersome she poke on her ear.

-Being said that, let me help here we're so close. I'll get a you a proper doctor.

-...aaaah! Milady so you were here.

Leon was bluntly interrupted by a hard yet refined woman's voice on his back. When turned around, he could see several black dressed men and a young looking woman dressed with a shawl on top of a maid uniform in front of them that just walked inside the shop.

The woman was looking expressionless at the girl opening and closing her bloodless lips.

-You suddenly disappeared so I've been looking for... what in the world have been you doing?

-I... I'm sorry... Teresa... I had seen some cute dresses and just wanted to...

The girl explained incoherently, Leon was already looking from the beginning at that frightening figure with an impudent attitude and raised his enormous body.

-So, I think I understand, this is your mistress...

-I'm milady's lady attendants head.

Was the cold short answer while stopping about 5 meters of them, she friendly talked

while tampering with her fingers the parasol in her hands.

-Leaving this aside, we have been bothering too much already, regarding the dresses I'll gladly buy them, meanwhile milady, please, return immediately to your dorm.

-U... understood...

The girl nodded like a puppet doll and quickly began moving but as soon as she stood up she stumbled and trampled into Leon's arm while from her lips emerged a high pitched shrill.

-Yaaaaaay!!! Help meeeeeee!

-...what!?

With the shriek breaking through his eardrums the giant screw up his eyes and the girl grasped hard his arm with her fingers.

-Teresa, help me! This beast hurt me and was trying to kidnap me!

-...hey hey! Wait a moment milady!

What was that? Indeed he clashed with that tedious girl but to be reproved in this way.

-Certainly I do like women but I have no interest in this underage project of a woman she's not yet ready to be flirted by me, maybe in seven or eight years you call me again and then we'll go out as much as you want.

-...unfortunately I can't wait that much.

The maid and the black dressed men weren't still trying to help the girl, from a blind spot location from them the faint hand that helped the girl. From the armhole came what could feel as a metallic lump that pushed the giant's side and she whispered to him:

-It's an order, kidnap me... if you refuse you'll be shot to death at once

-Hey hey, milady...

The little metallic cylinder that was showing from under her clothes froze the smile in Leon's lips.



It was a self defense gun called hand pistol caliber 22.0 with 6 bullets in rapid fire, even a kid could use it but had short range and its power was low.

-You think people get threatened with that peashooter? You could shoot to my heart with that toy and wouldn't kill me... See? If you want to threaten me you should aim for my eyeballs or the back of my mouth.

...the bullet is filled with poison.

The girl replied with a childish voice to the giant's advice while shaking her neck, she slightly moved her finger in the metallic disc that was the trigger and added like a

dagger to the threat.

-Not that I'm an expert but I heard with the right amount of damage even a bear would die instantly, you better do as I say unless you want to die!

-...

As per answer to the threat Leon just returned the gaze in silence.
He checked at the expression of the girl handling the gun with her little trembling hand that had raised the tension level and stormed with a thunderous voice.

-Hey! You! It's like you heard!

With a roar like an earth tremor that shake the insides of the shop and he quickly grabbed the girl and using her as a shield faced the lolita dressed woman and the black dressed men.

-We are keeping this lad! You will receive further instructions where to deliver the money later better be quiet until we contact you! If you contact the police you're not going to see her again in this world, got it!?

-...Le...Leon, what are you saying?

Menacingly showing his fangs he turned to his fellow who spoke with a voice filled with panic and triumphantly took up Abel, the giant thought in a distraction and appealed.

-Ah, even being partners but I didn't know you were so desperately in need of money! If I had known we could have tried to get a loan... but don't you know Leon, people's happiness is not predicated on money? True happiness is Love...

-What a fuss! Shut up and move on!

Picking the distracter partner by the back of his face, Leon stormed. With the blood erupting nose of colleague the giant quickly escaped like a stray cat stealing a fish from the market.

-No way, you're not getting away! After them!

At a strange scream of the giant the flowered clothes from the wall got flying and got throw the insides of the shop over the black dressed pursuers sent by the maid, blocking them.

-...I'm to report to my client.

While both priests got away with the girl followed by the black suited they all got away leaving aside on their backs only the woman and one black dressed man unnoticed without crossing eyes with the standing blue faced shop assistant started telling.

-You're to secure the girl, if not possible, I don't care if you dispose of her.

I

-This is a grave situation! For starters we are caught in a scandal with the duke of Bohemia!

They were state guests of Roma at castle Belvedere in a splendid tea room filled with high quality furniture like the leather sofa they were in, the reverse of Vatican, its wealth. The quickly prompted by the minister of holy affairs Bratislava's chief Boreslav was glaring at the two visitors.

-We have the niece... the duchess kidnapped in the middle of the city, it's just unthinkable! What the hell are doing the security corps of Rome!?

-Satisfactorily keeping the peace within the city, your highness.

Said one politely intoning the blame to Boreslav, between both visitors sat a middle-aged gentleman with the accent of Albion who said with a thoughtful expression and chewing a pipe with its fire already extinguished he was the delegate of the still coming back from a travel sacred minister of internal affairs.

-Not necessary to say this is not the best, but the lowering in the actual crime occurrence should be something to be prideful, haven't assassinated, kidnappings and

atrocious crimes like those being decreasing gradually?

-Hmm, how could I say it this time father?

Being called by the second in succession to the dukedom of Bohemia by its title didn't mean at all that Boreslav was a devout himself, it was simply that he had already forgotten his name. While lighting, a cigar the aristocrat exhaled smoke by the mouth at once.

-Not only a VIP person is abducted in broad daylight in the middle of the city... and we recently found the duke of Bohemia is no longer in the countryside, did I forget to mention any other scandal?

-It seems the duke sneaked away travelling incognito and is on its way to the city.

The description of the two who caused the stirring in the shop were of two clients, one young good looking the other like a bull the good looking one had green eyes very silent, Boreslav's funny reddish face returned the sight.

-This situation... it's hard to believe it's involved with common crime, we must think the group of kidnappers prior to commit the crime they carefully prepared everything, your Excellency, would you please enlighten us about all this? I wonder if you saw anybody suspicious by any chance.

-I don't know... I don't think I would be of any help at all.

Boreslav unintentionally declared. From the beginning he had been casting glares to the other man on the sofa while he was giving his inform.

-By the way, regarding this little scandal, I know the surrounding people of the niece got changed in the last month, they don't have much experience in their job now... It's quite possible they didn't realize the mysterious people with enough margin, right?

-Huh, a scandal?

The middle aged gentleman's eyes radiated a sudden interest, he switched his pipe and

left the topic flow naturally into his mind.

-The general replacement of attendants is a surprisingly general measure to adopt, what kind of problem did arise to do this?

-Aah, some kind of an accident.

Indeed he tiresomely shook his head; the duke pressed his still chewing cigar in the ashtray and then took out another and cut it ready.

-The head shop assistant lady from before got completely drunk and died drowned by the river, even if we could have had a good talk with her it's an improper accident if related with the duchess incident. Talking about eliminating corruption among government officials, we could clearly include everybody surrounding us.

-I see, from the surrounding circumstance... is anybody there bearing a grudge with the duke's house? Would you please make a list for us? We will enquiry from there.

-I can do that but... at any rate, to deal with the present situation we're going to need to trace a good plan of actions using all our resources, I'm sure you know this but by tomorrow morning the duke and the duchess are supposed to have an audience with his sanctity the pope, having this solved by then would be quite problematic.

-We'll use all our resources, but in any case, about tomorrow morning's audience schedule I recommend to postpone it.

The middle-aged gentleman gnawing the pipe gave a deep nod of approval yet he was not facing Boreslav, his glance was hold in the fourth in line for the succession of the dukedom who was keeping his silence.

The tone of his voice got somewhat imbued with the exposition and added.

-It would take time for this kind of incident, your excellence; do you think possible to postpone the ceremony of the audience with the duchess until her rescue?

-...nno, that would be problematic.

The middle-aged gentleman warned the one in front of him, that 30 years old man... Bohemia's duke waved his neck in silence, scratched his head with a finger with an air of precocious boy taking decisions and he faced his abstemious looking pupils to the caller.

-This time's audience is about requesting his sanctity's inestimable support against last year's insurrection; it would be unforgivable to modify the schedule for such a private matters... I really appreciate your troubles but under any circumstances the meeting ceremony must be held according to plan.

-But your highness that's just...

By opposing the orders of the duke of bohemia the young father got some eyebrows raised as result. Stating the preference of official affairs general situation without vacillating on the actual state of the girl being her alive or dead as a father, turning his blameful eyes somewhere else. But succeeding with the arguments, the middle-aged gentleman hold a quick breath and interposed.

-No, everything understood duke of Bohemia.

Raising a stick, the gentleman nodded elegantly, it was being already time to leave, while standing calmly from the sofa the duke and the heir and both of them looking down and added.

-If his Excellency is so much looking forward to it, tomorrow's audience shall proceed as planned. The settlement of the incident... the recovery of the duchess proceeding aside shall be according to your wishes, right?

-By absolutely all means, do so.

Here Ottakar too stand his waist from the sofa while nodding as always with a deeply depressed face, being that attitude indeed the recognized one all around the country, the agitation of a father whose daughter had been kidnapped not being shown at all. No, maybe from the beginning such agitation was just not there... with a great level of distrust and a cool headed facial expression faced the guests.

-I'm the only, apart from the pope, who cannot leave official business aside, my daughter... Libuše's affair is, as to his sanctity the pope refers, something to avoid at any cost.

-Leave it to me, I'll be sure to protect her highness.

Where the hell his confidence did come from? Indeed, assuring the request the middle-aged gentleman turned over his body as the young father proceeded, the guests sent by Ottakar left the room too.

-Ah, true! About tomorrow's audience, I brought a list of presents that will be submitted tomorrow, to whom shall I send it?

-If it's about that, it's jurisdiction of the management office of the official residence, however if you have it ready right now I could bring it with me...

While the discussion turned into something more businesslike the tree men disappeared through the front door, the only one left behind made a slight clicking of tongue while watching.

-... as always, this elder brother of mine, what a piece he is.

Boreslav spited mockery and a bitter smile in a laughter altogether with a cloud of tobacco smoke. The obsession with the work of the elder brother didn't begin just now, the previous year, when his wife felt ill he didn't leave his official duties a single day, of course, now that his daughter got abducted he thought maybe he would behave more father-like but the truth was this. Of course, as far as Boreslav was concerned the indifferent manner to his elder brother's daughter was pretty convenient there was no reason to complain at all.

-... you there, Teresa?

-Right next to you.

A single whisper sounded behind him a surreptitious presence shook behind him, since when was she there? Standing still nearby the fireplace there was a maid dressed figure

of a young woman. Under one armpit she had a folded parasol and she respectfully inclined her head.

-Do you have any... order for Teresa referring to this, excellence?

-Of course I have orders... that's why I called you, the ones who abducted Libuše, you already got their identities?

-Unfortunately, not yet.

The lady attendant's head... Teresa answered with a low voice. The one behaving like a simple maid with her pupils too sharply illuminated. With a more clear tone she proceeded with the report.

-However, at present, my subordinates are checking within the city, capturing them is just a matter of time.

-Be sure to get them soon, letting that girl set free is too dangerous.

Holding the cigar, Boreslav glared at nowhere.

-Maybe, she asked for Sofia? You already got rid of last month's head of maids? That woman could easily smell the "secret temple". Maybe if before getting rid of her she told anything to the lad, she could turn into a burdensome coal bed.

-If it happens, on the contrary this abduction incident couldn't be a chance to request his excellence's aid?

He left an unpleasant groan, in contrast, Teresa's facial expression didn't change a little bit, like she was plainly analyzing the situation.

-This abduction was to be treated as a mere incident, had possibly be somebody's aim. An abduction is an abduction, in the middle of the change of situation. Her highness could have dropped her life...

-The responsibility is of the perpetrators of the abduction... Humph, is that so? Surely

that's what we're going to say.

A valuable discovery had been accomplished, with the face of a scientist; Boreslav received in advance the opinion of the lady attendants head. Then he stand, and went to the corner of the room

-In any event, until my brother has an audience with the pope, we must keep that secret at any cost; I don't know how much suspects that lad but any discordant element must be removed.

With this dark murmur, the duke lingered next to the wall and extended his hand to a vault, he moved the dial in a complex process until the heavy iron door opened. From inside the vault he cautiously took "that" with his hands and weakly smiled. The brightness of illumination faded inside the room, without losing his smile in the face he hold with both hands the radiant thing from inside, making up a sinister omen. Inside the duke's hand was a small gleaming model, an exact reproduction of the cathedral of Saint Peter the public most sacred place for humanity. However, that was not a simple model, transparent like ice it was glass, the dukedoms most renowned artisan's merchandise, it took them three whole years to complete it a bohemian glass masterpiece.

-At last, the long waited opportunity, we cannot stumble...

He hold it dearly while shining like it irradiated light itself, Boreslav turned around with sharp eyes, and with a voice shaded in ambition and murderous intent he gave orders.

-Teresa, be sure to make disappear the lad... and also those two fathers she is with too.

II

Even if you say it has been January, today's Rome is as cheerful as springtime, the blue sky was inviting families and lovers outside, thus their eyes met in the pizza and crêpe house in the flourished plaza.

-Crap, you see happy faces everywhere...

Said the giant man who let down his hips on top of the stairs that looked like he was watching his own funeral, he took another sip from the can of beer with a gloomy grumble.

-Hey, you hack... what the hell are we doing here?

-Well, this is a place to eat pizza, is it not?

The giant faced his partner with serious skepticism; his nodding partner sat right next to him, a silver haired father who really stunk he was looking at the newspaper while gulping down pizza in his stomach like some kind of a war effort.

-By the way, this was my sixth; my next opponent shall be a margarita with anchovy maybe... Leon, what would you like?

-No, what I was asking was not that.

If he could get lost of that one, it would be so great he overlook the long stairway while the giant was keenly talking, for some reason without looking at his left side moaned with a devil's like voice, he failed to Christ temptation.

-I... tonight I must go to Milan, I have to clean a whole mountain of work, I'm of a busy social position... moreover why do I have to be here while you're eating?

-That's because there's no other option. Look, that's us, aren't we some infamous abductors? We like binding our victims... Hey, Sofia?

-Huh, it's as Nightroad pointed.

The one who agreed repeatedly with Abel's speech was the girl sitting on the left of Leon, the one from some before had been cutting elegantly the pizza and eating it on small bits, the lad cleaned her lips with a handkerchief and formerly nodded.

-Whatever it's said, you are some infamous kidnappers, sincerely; it would be a problem if we forgot what happened there, hum.

-... just let me forget it, please.

He lengthened his chest like a fitness teacher⁴ and averted the girl's eyes, Leon returned to his beer with sullenness and he vulgarly eructed.

-It's just an approximation but we both and the brat are as good as dead, here around I'm getting a rash, what would it be the cause...

-Here, Garcia.

A small finger thrust on the flank of the agonizing giant, with quite shining green eyes the girl looked up to Leon but spoke arrogantly.

-We are thirsty here, bring something to drink.

-... hey, quack!

He turned to the hostage's request the mood of the infamous abductors completely broken. Using the opportunity to blame his companion for all his troubles.

-I left the caring for this brat to you, didn't I? I don't care anymore about all of this. In any case, tonight I'm going to Milan...

Leon's "must go" speech was interrupted in the middle, suddenly realizing the silver haired father was no longer there, he had climbed down the long stairs unnoticed and the only thing left he could see was the last shadows of his tall back disappearing behind the corner.

-Son of a...

Leon glared at the unreliable escaping back from the pizza stand with murderous intend sparking in his eyes. Finally, he opened a paper back with resignation and took out a canned juice from it.

⁴ The original in the book is different, but if I start talking about Mikos (Shinto shrine maidens) and oracles, nobody will get it...

-Here... I already told you, this is not a treat. When this is over you'll have to pay all of it.

-Don't worry, even if it doesn't look like my family is extremely rich from the Bohemia's dukedom, you can send them the total bill.

Hearing this, she sounded like some Prague's large enterprise head's daughter but without the charm of innocent girl at all... the girl had a precocious assured face, she took the canned juice with her hand but whatever she was thinking she didn't say a thing. Then she started to incline the can on all sides and she gently twisted her neck.

-Hold on Garcia, the lid is not open, open it properly and **then** give it to me.

-...you just have to pull the ring from the top, try it.

Leon's voice was filled with a cold eco, he turned his eyes to the girl and with an imposing voice spat to the girl.

-I'm hearing a considerable irritation coming from you. On top of that, don't waste my time... shit! I'd love to see the face of your parents. Only thinking in yourself, only doing for yourself.

-...

Facing the giant distorting his lips loathsomely the girl got silent while staring at the canned juice. With her face a little reddish murmured a little whisper.

-...not.

-What?

Even if the giant had an acute sense of hearing he couldn't hear well the girl's mumbling, he bent his enormous body and Leon neared his ear to the girl.

-I can't hear you, do you have any complaints?

-...you talk too much without knowing!

Surely, this time he could hear with an angry yell, the girl's face had become more and more red.

-I've never drunk anything like this before! I've seen other kits drinking it before but this is the first one I hold one in my hand... so I don't know how to open it.

-... if that's it just ask how to.

Indeed, the giant didn't laugh at the embarrassing girl's confession. He just took the can from the girl's hands and peeled off the cover.

-Here... drink it without spilling.

-A...aye, thank your mercy.

The girl, thanking the giant with pomposity, brought the can to her mouth and with the sparkling eyes of having received a long yearning toy. After just a sip the girl replied.

-Burgh! What is this? Take it away at once!

-Idiot! Is there any retarded who drinks it that way when so hot?⁵

She drank too fast. A large quantity of fruit juice spilled out by the face of the violently coughing girl. Leon roughly wiped it with a handkerchief. And he showed the proper way to drink it to those already filling with tears green eyes.

-Got it? You just have to gently tilt the can, and let the air fill the insides of the can... the liquid from inside the can will get out by itself.

-Nghu... ghish way?

⁵ At this point it's interesting to note in Japan you can buy both cold and hot canned beverages from vending machines (for those who don't know).

She got the can back to Leon so he could show it again. Sofia quietly waited expectantly and with inexperienced hand retook the can.

-Ooh! You can really do it Garcia!

-My my, you just needed to know how to.

Leon raised his thumb in approval to the lightened girl's face, he also returned to drinking his beer and dried it empty changing his facial expression.

-Well then, time to finish the lesson, better we get back to our serious talk... say kid, what the hell do you want for us to do? Isn't it already time for you to tell us the truth?

-Huh, as to what attains to you, could you do me the favor of writing a letter? Its destination will be my father.

Answered her while sipping the juice with an innocent face. Once finished the can she tried shaking it unsatisfied.

-The so-called threatening letter. "We took your daughter as a hostage; if you want for us to return her unharmed you better accept all our requests" yes, I want you to threaten me.

-In short, you want for us to become partners in this making of an abduction charade? Milady, do you even understand what you are requesting? That is an splendid crime.

-Are you making a fool of me? Of course I understand it... if it's about the remuneration don't worry, my house has more than enough. There's plenty of ransom, you can keep all you want. If you do your part adequately you'll be well compensated in such way, huh.

-I see... however, before I answer could I make a question?

Leon looked with his sparking eyes the girl who just started with the unthinkable request with an arrogant attitude. Maybe he looked clumsy and gentle but with a risky sounding opposing voice asked.

-Come again, do expressly such a thing? Do you have any grudge against your father maybe?

-... you might say so.

Where they heard the slang, the girl looked a bit disturbed. She drop her eyes and with that she lengthened the bluff.

-My father is always only thinking in work, always with work and work family matters he never even looks back... at any rate last year until my mother passed away he only worked.

By remembering the dead of her mother a dark light run into her eyes, and with a voice heavy as a ton said.

-Therefore, just by causing a little disturbance I immediately got scolded. Father was always in duty of social meetings couldn't even see him. If his daughter got abducted it would be quite problematic... ah, probably after that he will maybe get worried about? If it's like that there's no need to worry. Your job finishes when you send the threatening letter, all the rest I'll do it by myself. You don't need to worry anymore...

-I'm sorry, but I refuse.

Instead of resuming the demands, the giant returned to it faster... the giant kept looking down at the girl without changing his face, since when she taught her the proper way to drink canned juice it didn't change a bit. Without seeming concerned, his black eyes filled with carnivorous intent, piercing that childish face.

-Don't even bother, see? Whatever the circumstances it looks to me this is a kid trying to coerce her father. If you have any complaint for your father ask him when free, don't turn over on your own problems. You damn brat.

-Da... Damn brat!? Are you calling me DAMN BRAT!?

-Is here anybody else?

Having spit this out Leon stand up and turned tails to leave, he picked up a mountain of paper bags and informed coldly.

-Crap, why did I got to get involved with this idiotic lad? It was a complete waste of time... farewell, you foolish girl, I don't think we'll see us again, better you quickly return to your daddy's house like a good girl.

-Hey Garcia! That was rude!

With all his concern lost the enormous man looked otherwise and the girl raised her shrilling voice, waved her thin limbs and threatened.

-If you don't do as I say I'm going to scream! I'm going to ask for help! Is that good for you!?

-Do as it pleases you, tonight I'm going to Milan to meet some girl. I've no more time to waste with spoiled brats like you.

The threat didn't stop the progress of the giant, showing his back to the lad he just waved his hand over the shoulder.

-I just don't want to know anything else about you, about this good for nothing spoiled brat who cannot cross a word with her daddy... I'm finishing this worthless game just turn home right now and stop being such a spoiled kid.

-This...

The girl took the thoughtless words up to here, perhaps for the first time in her life. In a moment, she raised her voice with her blood boiling.

-I do really hate you, Garcia! I hope you choke with your chest hair!

-...err, excuse me Sofia, what's the matter?

Looking at the girl like he dashed something away with surprised eyes, was a silver haired young climbing upstairs while carrying a mountain of pizza and some tea cups.

Raising a comfortable voice to the girl running downstairs, when doing this he tripped and letting out a shriek began to fell down.

-...wha? You idiot.

The father, with hot tea running down his head after falling down the stairs with a scream with victim's eyes watched the girl gallop towards the plaza while Leon clicked his tongue and bent his head. If they had to get to Milan by today they should better go to the station right now. The giant certainly was not in the best of moods, he shook his shoulders and made like going to the back of the stairs. Yet suddenly stopped.

-...tsk!

Started angrily murmuring between teeth while extending a finger from his head to the chest, the giant and twice again rolled over the same spot.

-Crap, this is why I hate brats.

Then, started to get down the stairs while murmuring at a low tone.

The centre of Villa Borghese Park, also called as "The park of the lake" a place where plants were arranged in beautiful decorative geometrical fences. Under the first clouds blocking the sunshine that left long shadows over the fallen leaves of the trees. Can this desolate's cemetery atmosphere be hated? Even being a holiday as it was there was nobody in the park, there were only empty bench lined here and there.

-Hey, what's that man over there? Doing such thing... from what status does he think he is?

In that one bench cursing some "Sofia" while looking at the evening sun and once again clicking his tongue.

-Crap, there's already no time left... I'm weakening.

Frantically cursing the "enemy" who narrowly escaped eventually, half of the day already passed, now as for himself, time was more valuable than gold. He was cursing

his own idiocy with each breath he exhaled as he extracted one of Sofia's writing paper from the bottom of his bag. He then lowered his eyes and politely opened it with not sure where came from sad eyes.

-“Church” a trap. Be careful with your uncle.

You had to write it in quite a rush, right? The fragrant feminine wormlike calligraphy over high class paper was inclined, there were even parts that were hard to read closing his eyes to mere thread he let escape another “Sofia” with his breath.

-Sorry, Sofia. Even if I exchanged my life for yours, looks like I cannot do anything for you...

What the hell was she going to do? Thought while staring at the red dying evening sky, the girl was asking herself. What to do? Roma was the first town. Obviously, she had no acquaintances. She neither was sure of which of all her servants she had come whom were really enemies, relying in her poor judging skills would be dangerous. In that moment she deeply regret her youth. “Sofia's” intelligence was famous in Prague but there were she was, nobody knew anything. Even if she went to the police they would think it was some children's bullshit... yes, like that rude father.

-Leon Garcia, huh?...

“Tonight I'm going to meet my daughter in Milan” she remembered the face he showed when saying this, and “Sofia” exhaled deeply. Who was? Obviously a married or divorced man couldn't become a priest then; the only option left was that his wife had passed away. To sum up, the daughter he was so eager to meet in Milan was another child from a single father, just like her. Even without knowing her “Sofia” was already jealous. Even if in the same situation it was obvious that her father didn't show the same affection. That big man, looking back to her, he didn't probably put such a burden to his daughter.

-...maybe it's better I didn't drag him along.

While looking at the evening fading light “Sofia” talked to herself. Not that such a rude man was particularly useful after all, she also had compassion for the daughter expecting the visit of her father. Even that father was better than nothing...

-...I must say I had been looking for you, your highness.

The girl, absorbed in such complex thoughts came back to consciousness and turned from the dim light to the ringing husky voice.

-I'm really sorry... to disturb your tranquility milady, but what are you doing in such a flowery place?

-Te... Teresa!?

“Sofia” feeling relieved, raised her head and from her throat let out a shriek, since when? She then realized the bench was completely surrounded by black dressed men. Standing right in the middle was a maid dressed woman... with reptilian looking eyes holding her breath. Then she let out.

-Y...you, how did you know I was here!?

-I'm in charge of your highness's situation... first duchess of the Bohemia dukedom, Miss Libuše Maria Přemyslid.

With the blunt answer the maid raised her umbrella. Expressionless to the end however she spat a polite warning.

-Leaving that, you shall immediately return to St. Peter, your father and uncle are deeply worried.

-...a, above that, do not approach! You uncle's dog!

Then she throw away the beret altogether with the black haired wig she had been wearing and then the “girl”, better said Libuše yelled. “Prag's green pearl” as were called those originally emerald green hairs were released.

-All of you, I know everything...aren't you all spies hired by my uncle!? And also you were the ones who killed Sofia!

-Spy? Killed? You are overlooking things, milady.

She took the blame expressionless and slowly raised her umbrella and as a jailer who rebukes a prisoner's words.

-It doesn't matter what you say of us, good or bad... but don't get wrong guesses, the former head of lady attendants died not by us but because she got drunk and fell to the river, there she died drown.

-Drunk? Sofia never drank more than a drop of alcohol!

Contrasting with the head maid her tone was filled with anger. Libuše moved violently the writing paper on her hand, without letting her touch it keeping a safe distance.

-This is a letter Sofia sent me before dying! I asked her to go to watch uncle Boreslav's movings. I know for a long time uncle had been maneuvering aiming for the dukedom! Hiring suspicious looking scum like you, frequently having secret meetings with German envoys... In this letter there is all thos movementes listed one by one!

... as I thought, don't you think you misunderstood something, your highness?

In Libuše's had there was no longer only the writing paper there also appeared her palm sized firearm "Palm pistol". But knowing it was only dangerous to herself, nobody seemed to care.

-We all, are not unlike your higness loyal to none else than Bohemia, yet we prefer the younger brother, but to call that a conspiracy... couldn't you highness had been deceived by Sofia?

...do, don't come any closer!

Libuše let the warning with a shrilling voice she was no longer facing Teresa, her surroundings had changed the slowly approaching black dressed guys tried to close up the space between them. She waved the palm pistol and menaced them with it.

-If you come any closer I'm going to shoot... I'm serious!

-That would be impossible, your highness...

With that, Teresa's voice waved with emotion of disdain and a hint of malice.

-Just by waving around that kind of toy-like, what menace you think it is to us?



-...!?

When she thought she heard the sharp breath sound of the head maid of lady attendants and Libuše changed the position of the gun she felt a dull pain in her hand. Something she couldn't see with her eyes came flying... but before she could even be aware of that the holding palm pistol flew away too quickly. But, what the hell was that? Revolving like some paperware in the ground there was a teared gun barrel.

-... please, stay quiet, and hand over the letter without even an scratch on it.

Facing the girl who couldn't even answer due to pain and surprise, Teresa scooped her chin. Libuše was trying to resist the pain and when she lifted her face to the silently advancing black dressed men she lifted her hand.

-N, no...

While not being able to pull the fingers from the extended hand the girl thought in the grotesque death she was going to get. For all that, a ten years old girl was completely unable to escape from the ten men that were getting close to her. While not being able to move her limbs, she bit herself in the tongue.

This way, being captive, was how she was going to die? Without even being able to see her dad, having her corpse buried at some god forsaken place? The girl, just like reading in a paper one's lifeline felt in trance due to the despair and terror. And just in that moment.

-... hey you, you better leave that brat off.

The thick voice echoed with a ferocity resembling an animal's roar.

Turning their attention to that point without thinking in a reflect move, there they saw standing like a statue there was the enormous human figure of a giant, with his black hair waving on the wind in a lions manner. Libuše was watching without believing.

-... who are you?

-Who? Me? I am just an atrocious kidnapper you know.

While the girl kept staring the opponent of Teresa spat the answer while liking his lips. Then he crawled a finger by an elegant bracelet on his wrist in a excessively lasciviously way indeed.

-That brat is an important prisoner, to take somebody else's trophy away isn't it some bad manners?

-... take care of him.

At the order of the head maid a black dressed man immediately moved. He pointed at the enormous man with a gun but...

-Sto...!

With a big grin in his mouth quickly throw a bracelet from his giant hand instantaneously. Prepared to connect with the thin blade when the gun started spitting fire it was taken from his hands following a deafening sound of an explosion.

-Crap... gas?

It didn't expand as normal fumes of an explosion... from inside the enveloping white smoke raised a violent cough. It seemed like within the chakram there was attached a tear-gas bomb. Immediately covering her mouth, Teresa's eyes started to fill with tears.

-Unacceptable... all of you, secure the duchess, retreat at once! Turn windward!

-... oops, I'm not going to let you do that.

Following the orders they black men carried Libuše when heard the voice with unparalleled precision and advanced shooting. Grabbing her on their shoulders they let out a scream and the black dressed men with the duchess began to retreat like one only tall shadow. Another father, with an air of bank robber with the handkerchief hold on his mouth, got next to the violently coughing girl, hold her on his shoulders and yelled to the giant.

-I already secured her, Leon!

-Good, well done, quack!

The shouting giant had already prepared some chakrams ready, The black dressed men who already began to withdraw get to the maid attendants head and throw their dangerous looking weapons.

-I'm not going to let you escape!

But the battle circle with which they captured the target before were already turning tails to the umbrella holding woman. The umbrella with a fabric made of nylon and polyamide cloth fibers was wide open and repelling the chakrams. Furthermore, the tip was aiming Leon's forehead.

... d'oh!

If he duck his head a moment later the many thousands glass needles that were expelled from the tip of the umbrella would have turned his head into ground meat. Instead, with a huge noise those carved a big hole in a tree on his back which clashed down. Evading the falling tree with a hop Leon passed his middle finger by the hole of the next chackram but...

-... tsk, so they escaped, huh?

Looking at the already dispersing in the wind smoke the giant sketched a sarcastic smile. He couldn't see any longer the figures of the woman or the black dressed men he could only hear a dull yelling voice coming closer and also maybe the unexpected sound of an explosion. He could also hear approaching the sound of the sirens of a patrol car coming closer.

-... hey, are you okay lad?

After confirming there were no signs of the enemy Leon turned down his gaze to the girl and helped her to get on her feet.

-Are your ears ok? How bad, what could I have done, things were so bad I could even properly warn you... can you even hear me?

- I... I somehow can hear you, Garcia.

Due to the explosion, her eardrums were still numb, for example, she could barely hear her own voice... nodding absent-mindedly Libuše answered more to herself. Now thinking, what was doing that big man in such a place?

-Garcia, weren't you supposed to be on your way to Milan?

-... about that is more of an idiotic talk.

She asked what he didn't want to be asked... with such a face Leon turned the other way. Passing a comb by his untraced hair he shrugged his shoulders.

-I was going to take a ticket for tonight's last train but seems I caught Abel's clumsiness.

-You sure say mean things, Leon.

The other father replied with an old fashioned lecture-type voice, the giant did as if he couldn't hear. And turned another way, casually, like looking that way.

-Garcia...

At this moment, what would be good to say...? In the social position Libuše was born, there weren't many occasions when she had to thank anybody. So she didn't really know what to do.

That's why the only thing Libuše could think of was one word.

-This... thank you.

-Uh-oh, you are quite hasty to give thanks. From now on we have one more task to do.

The giant couldn't help to get a funny face to the thanks of the girl. While showing a quite villainous looking grin he turned to her.

-If it could be finished with that, I'd gladly take ten thousand thanks from you, but until

it's finished don't lose focus.

-Task? What task are you talking about?

-Hey hey, it's obvious isn't it? Aren't we some despicable kidnappers?

What was so funny? Happily shaking his shoulders the giant took a pair of sunglasses from his pocket. With that looked at Libuše's face while playing with his neck with exaggerated ferocity.

-After getting someone kidnappers must... send a threatening letter with an accorded rescue, of course.

III

Darkness filled the round shaped room. If you looked harder the darkness in there you could maybe see the ancient ghosts of the martyrs. Likely this world's most splendorous ruins... the Coliseum's shadow. A decaying behemoth's corpse in the uninhabited bottom of the night.

-Hmph, considerably making me wait...

Standing close between two stone pillars, Boreslav pulled up the neck of his coat. The historic time when used arena of those ruins, the building stone part that was in the floor had been lately during its history being taken away. Where he was standing now, once had been the place where wild animals were being kept. In ancient times the pillars that sustained the ceiling that were standing close together looked like graves put together.

-What time is it now Teresa?

-24:00... the specified time in the threatening letter.

The nearby one who answered the duchess's uncle question was a maid dressed woman. Regardless being midnight she was holding an umbrella, with a sharp glint in the eye

was continuously looking left and right.

-If they are really coming it is going to be soon... be very careful.

-Rest assured, I'm not an amateur.

With a thin laugh the duchess uncle showed a thick stick. Two years before in firing practices championship commemoration within the army he was awarded with that stick, it had a concealed firearm. Within a fifty meters radius whatever the opponent he was confident of hitting it.

-But this cold is not helping... my friend, they are sure not expecting to freeze us to death here right?

-... sorry but we also dislike the cold.

Altogether with the thick voice, a dazzling glow hit them at same time.

Since when was that one there? At about ten meters of distance a figure leapt out from the ruins around a corner, turning to a military purpose torch light, a deep black shadow was standing from the ground. The giant was wearing wrinkled priest's garb under the big sunglasses he opened an over-familiar mouth.

-You are the little brother of the duke, right? You just brought one person, well done well done.

-... are you the aforementioned kidnapper?

While protecting his eyes from the light of the torch, Boreslav hold up the trunk on his hand showing it well. And openly spat with discomfort.

-As requested, I brought the "sanctuary". Hurry, let me see my niece... where is Libuše?

-I'm here, uncle.

Together with the giant's signal, two figures moved from his back. Similar to the giant, both were wearing big sunglasses the girl advanced next to a silver haired father.

-Hey, Libuše... I read your letter.

Due to the sunglasses he couldn't see the facial expression of the girl. But Boreslav could feel the people eating shark menacing eyes.

-I know your intrigues, I want to exchange Sofia's letter for the "sanctuary" at 24:00, I'll be waiting at the Arena / Libuše... I felt low too, being threatened by a kid.

-...this, Sofia's letter on it there are well detailed and accounted all your intrigues.

The girl didn't respond to her uncle's provocation. To such a short tempered girl this was quite unusual with a calm move she took out a writing paper and swing it.

-If I show this to my father, maybe you'll really fall right... but I don't want to go that far. If you give me this "sanctuary" and hereafter you promise to behave your pretensions, I'll keep this to myself and will give you this card.

I'm quite grateful for this; I've not enough words to thank you.

Being illuminated by the glow of the torch, while observing the cheeks of the girl were stiff by nervousness Boreslav, on purpose, started to laugh. Snatched with impetus the suspended writing paper and then scooped the chin to the fathers next to the girl.

-However, before the transaction there's something I want to ask... this two, what are they? About your friends, aren't they a little older for you?

-They are just some people I met today.

Looking up to the giant bystander, Libuše's tension seemed to slightly relax. Where did their pride come from?

-In spite of being dragged in this disturbance I lend you all my strength. With all my gratitude.

-In short, in casual connection, neither planning nor organization was at your shoulders... no, that's what I heard.

Boreslav's voice was reverberating with an echo of victory and, at the same time, the origin of the illuminating dizzy light... the torch carried by the giant, set on the audience seats of the coliseum as a searchlight. Appearing illuminated one after another inside the circle of light, there appeared the group of black dressed in a rifle holding position.

-Oh, uncle, what is the meaning of this?

-Did you really think I have the same childish honesty of you, my dear niece?

-The he turned to his niece and the kidnappers with a cold gaze and a moonlike smile in his face.

-Possibly the side of Ottakar is the one who has been using you to provoke me. These two priests are probably my big brother's subordinates... I had that concern even if I let you come to talk and if you are normal fathers, it's even better, no restraint needed as well.

-T... then, from the beginning you were trying to deceive us... you coward!

The girl moaned to the crowd aiming their rifles to her, besides, the silver haired father started to sob by the circumstances.

-Oh, come on...! Du... duchess, let's give up! If we apologize now, we may get excused for this game!

-U, uncle, there's one last think I would like to ask...

On the opposite to the sobbing father, the duchess calmly acknowledged the reality. She slowly faced the gun mouth and dropped her shoulders and put up both hands with resignation.

-What's the secret with the "sanctuary"? What's with this trap you set!?

-Pff, all that about Sofia's letter was a bluff as I suspected... whatever, this is the last knowledge I'll be offering you.

With a quick look to his niece's holding paper, Boreslav blow his nose. With absolute superiority composure, he started to tell casually.

-Truth be told it's not that complicated, if you activate the mechanism in the pedestal of the "sanctuary"... the miniature high definition listening device, see?

-Listening device?

Libuše leaned her head like she had a doubt, probably in pope's residence there were also interception countermeasures. As soon as the recorder started weren't those devices going to turn on too? No, in the first place, what would uncle get with that?

-Aah, certainly having to activate the listening device and so on probably it won't be of much help. But, this listening device right after being offered it is going to break; it is going to emit a certain kind of electromagnetic waves... the people of the Vatican are sure going to feel these waves.

-... in short, you are going to let them find the listening device on purpose?

Finally she tied the ideas all together... this time the one who raised an eyebrow with a surprised face was the giant next to Libuše and also groaned in displeasure.

-If you activate a listening device in a present, that would become an international diplomatic scandal... the dukedom of Bohemia won't be able to explain it.

-Exactly, I dare say my old brother is going to have to abdicate and the ducate will be inherited by his daughter right... but, the duchess is still too young, somebody reliable will have to become regent. In other words; me.

Leaving aside what the giant was pointing, Boreslav steadily nodded. But when he looked to the eyes of his mortified niece he turned and a smile raised to his lips.

-However, Libuše, thanks to you being "abducted" we can omit the unnecessary extra. If by any chance you disappeared, the first in the line of succession would be me. It's not that regency is bad but anyhow I'd like to try being called "his majesty the duke".

-... ready to open fire.

The one next to Boreslav who feeling well, hold a cigar in his mouth, Teresa, raised a hand. She pointed her own umbrella towards the girl, and get into position to order fire to the black dressed men.

-The prisoner was suddenly killed and we at the end of the battle shoot to death the kidnappers... we will report this to my older brother. Well then, see you, my dear niece.

-Fire!

At the order of the head maid, a terrible sound of explosion erupted. But, that was not the gunshot of the rifles. Right before the black dressed men could pull the trigger the seats where they were standing suddenly exploded.

-Wha!?

Turning head without thinking what Boreslav found in front of his eyes was a gigantic blazing column. And mixed by the wind the remnant an irritant odor, a plastic explosive ammonia. When the torch illuminated the audience seating collapsed by the shock they found there was no trace of the black dressed men, not even one, it seemed they all fell through the big hole there appeared.

-Cr... crap...!

-Hohoo, please, don't move!

Immediately the umbrella the head maid had been pointing at the duchess moved to the silver haired father. In that moment, like it was a magic trick a percussion revolver appeared a gunshot gushed out and accurately only blew away the weapon.

-... the one who has fallen in a trap is you, uncle.

In contrast to the calmed voice of her uncle, the niece's voice was much gloomier. The giant man next to her while showing a music box sized tape recorder pointed out with a

disappointed voice.

-It's true the story of Sofia's letter was a bluff but if you move, we move too. Trying to kill me... if you want to get this, the listening device and so the proof of your treason.

-Thi... this was unexpected, Libuše! You were just a decoy from the beginning!?

The uncle glared at his niece with a face distorted with hatred and repugnance. This was the worst, even if his elder brother ever knew the matter about the listening device Boreoslav was confident in his deceiving skills. Whatever they said, there was no solid proof linking him to the device... but, if his plans to kill the duchess ever saw light there was just no possible explanation!

-If this is how things are, at least you...

-Please, stop this, oldie... if you make any move you're going to get hurt.

The one who said this with a thick voice when Boreoslav readied his weapon was the giant. Leon gave the warning to the weapon gripping aristocrat with grinding teeth.

-There's a bomb under your feet too... if you move anymore BOOM.

-Txi...

The light circumference illuminated under the aristocrat's feet. Grinding his teeth he lowered the special weapon.

-This is the end...

Dropping his shoulders the duchess gave a groan and looked at the maid attendant's head's eyes without a glint of victory in her eyes, it was more like she just solved some hated homework, with such a face she left a sigh. A lot had happened somehow or other her father was now safe. What was left was to restrain her uncle and talk about removing the listening device from the "sanctuary".

But Libuše found herself in a mix of feeling relieved and a tinge of loneliness... after all from beginning to end it seemed like her father hadn't even tried to find her.

-... hey, that's enough for today.

In spite of having won the bet, a big palm beat the lowered shoulders of the desolate breath holding girl. When turned her head, the priest garbed giant had a bold smile.

-Everything ended well, right? Milady... with this you can go back to your daddy's.

-... thanks, Garcia.

While taking the suitcase with the "sanctuary" from the giant's hand, Libuše in hot haste. Thinking in how the trick worked she couldn't repress a smile.

-You two also worked hard. I'm very thankful. But, thanks to all your efforts, father is safe now. When all this is over we shall manage...

-Pff... hahahaha!

The laughter burst from the side, it was filled with frank evil intention and disdain. Libuše shut her mouth and turned her sharp eyes to the point of origin.

-...what's so funny, uncle?

-No, nothing funny... it's just that, Libuše, you are quite compassionate.

The laugh came to an end, Boreslav swung his head with clumsiness. But the mocking lips kept closed in the edges still hung a poisonous sneer.

-You, you crossed this dangerous bridge just for the sake of your father's well being? What a piteous daughter. I'm so envious of my big brother... but what about my brother?

-What do you mean with that?

-The much you're thinking on him is he thinking in you... My brother, he really loathes you.

In a casual manner, yet, with obvious evil intentions, the uncle kept throwing bombs to

his niece. He involuntarily stiffened his cheeks while sending these messages to his niece started to smile.

-From the beginning what he really wanted was a boy. In order to succeed the dukedom's throne. So when his wife got pregnant he continuously prayed so it would be a boy... yet, what came was a daughter.

-...

When Libuše heard this talk for the first time she couldn't give a reply, and she didn't realize when his uncle's stick steadily started to raise, swallowed the saliva on his mouth... to pour so much poison on to the girl's ears.

-My elder brother does obviously hate you... even when his daughter got abducted, he left the matter into the Vatican's and my hands, aren't those proof more than enough?

-L... liar!

The girl shout the high-pitched shrill with a shoulders movement... it didn't matter how much effort she made to behave like an adult, for a girl on her teens such poison was just unbearable. With the provocations, he was forgotten, therefore he could resume proceeding.

-Lies! Lies! Uncle! You're a liar!

-Idiot! Don't go so near him!

The giant's hand quickly stretched and caught those slender shoulders. The shout calmed the girl she had to do something but in that moment his finger handled and released the switch the rivals overlooked.

-Now... you die, Libuše!

With the speed of the lightening the raised stick aimed at the girl's forehead. The next instant, it really looked to everybody the bullet bore in the girl's forehead.

-Gosh!

-Ga... Garcia!?

An eye blink before, Leon flew right in front of the girl and from his throat came a groan. His shoulder took the hit turning sideways he fell down.

-Wrong... Leon! Libuše!

Abel, who had been tying Teresa in a crouched position and instantly raised his gun just wasn't in time. Boreslav turned the stick from the fallen giant and aimed to the heart of the girl again... but, eventually he couldn't pull the trigger.

-...ugh!

The one who left the shriek, was Boreslav himself who also threw the stick. And with his blood boiling he turned over.

What the hell did just happen?

Next to the moaning Leon who was pulling down his shoulder, Libuše raised her head in blank amazement. That field of vision immediately got blurry due to the gunpowder smoke that raised from the revolver hold by that moaning figure.

-Who are you... !?

-...are you ok, Libuše!?

The man wrapped in a plain suit asked the girl's well-being with quite an inorganic voice. Indeed really thin with a facial expression that remembered an abstemious young looking high executive. But when Libuše saw that face she let out a high-pitched scream.

-F... father!? What are you doing here!?

-... well, just checking how are you doing, my duchess.

The voice that answered the girl was not her father's, behind them Ottokar lowered his

handgun in silence. From inside the darkness another twenty human figures appeared. All armed and looking like catholic priests the first one gentleman, politely asked the duchess in the language of Rome with a hint of Albion's accent about her.

-I'm really sorry, as per my clumsiness your highness suffered such an unpleasant situation first I'd like to apologize... Oh, I forgot, I'm priest in chief of the holy affairs of state, Wordsworth, to serve you.

-“Professor”... what are you doing here?

Sinking down with cold sweat without being able to discharge his old barreled gun Abel just sat down. While the chief of holy affairs of state's staff took care of Teresa he displeased his lips.

-In addition to arriving late because I stopped in quite a delicious place... what the hell is this, could somebody please be kind enough to explain me the circumstances?

-Well, the talk is going to be quite long... truth is we had been quite concerned with young duke's late moves as a request from the actual duke.

With an unruffled face started to laugh and the “professor” grabbed the fallen stick from the young duke. Holding it with care not to erase the fingerprints he handed it over to a young blonde father next to him.

-It has already been one week maybe? From the duke “I have received some turbulent signs from my young brother please, observe his stay in Rome” we received this private request. This is why I had always been watching... Ah, and obviously I know everything you had been involved into. With just a call to his majesty my senses tell me you're not going to set free from this.

-Since one week before?

Kneeling next to Leon, Libuše suspiciously raised an eyebrow. She directed an inquiring look to the gentleman.

-Had you been investigating uncle for so long? Besides, father requested your

collaboration?

-...before dying Sofia didn't send a letter not only to you.

The low tone voice didn't come from the "professor" remaining silent to that moment a gloomy face she had seen somewhere in Bohemia looked at the duchess, and calmly answered the girl's question.

-A letter from her also arrived to my place... but unfortunately there was no proof.

-Like that, but if it was true we would have put an end to it quite before.

While spitting out the exact words of the duke from the holding one's tongue the "professor" added to the explanation. But the pipe holding voice had concealed some echoes of displeasure.

-For example, We would like to know how many bribes had been accepted to help his usurpation. That investigation is going to be delayed by this. The only reason... we intervened is because your father was quite concerned about your safety, my duchess.

-My... my safety?

Excepting the middle aged man's words, Libuše blink her eyes. What did he mean with her father being worried for her safety? Didn't her father hate her?

Not being able too look at the disturbed girl's face, the "professor" face of tiresome didn't change. He then continued the explanation.

-In short, all of this, just one week before, he was still hidden in the court of Bohemia preparing the path with his faction members but we couldn't catch them. Yet there we had been preparing with impatience the restraints for the younger duke but the problem was if we acted there could have been some harmful revenge to the duchess... the only concern of the duke was this point.

-F... father...

With her usual bluntness she reticently looked up to her father and Libuše frowned her

face. With what expression should she face her father? Shortening the words⁶... with her short stature yet if there was a moment to push her warm hands it was then.

-Let's go, milady.

While pressing the stain of blood that appeared on his shoulder Leon winked to the girl. Changing her anxious face and prepared some compliments to fill that small face with a smile.



⁶ This particular expression has particular meaning in Japanese, in Japanese the longer the word / expression / phrases the more polite and, therefore, the less familiarity with the other person you're talking with.

-It's all right... there's no parent who hates his own children.

-...

She turned to the awkwardly laughing giant, the duchess thought she should say something... but, in the end, she just couldn't find the words. Still, turned out it was not necessary.

Deeply nodding, the girl start running towards her father's place.



-Ah? Good morning father Garcia.

This morning had a good weather Milan too.

Right now the night shift finished and it looked they were going home. A still young looking head nurse appeared in front of the nurse station, she stopped her eyes on the mountain-high pile of paper bags and showed a courtesy smile.

-Today you came extremely soon, did you took the first train?

-No, I came with an airship. There was a friend of mine coming this way and I took advantage.

The mountain of paper bags... truth be told it was a mountain looking giant man holding paper bags returned a shy smile. And then, that broadminded drawn-like man

asked with an unusual hoarse voice.

-Leaving that, miss. How is the state of the girl?

-Fana? Aah, this morning her condition seems to be pretty good.

With the face of an abandoned cat he spied the depths of the long corridor the giant seemed to look for something charming, he nodded to the kindly smiling nurse. The most inner part sickrooms... St. Ambrocious General Hospital, specialized on incurable sickness, here is where the interned children in special rooms could be glanced.

-Hurry up and go to see her, she is surely anxiously waiting for you.

-Haa...

He nodded with urge and the giant man step on with vacillation. Between the packages wrapped in a beautiful ribbon he timidly watched down the corridor. Such a face in the giant was a wonder for the nurse head.

-What happened father Garcia? Don't you want to see your daughter?

-No, nothing like this, it's just this morning I've my mind somewhere else. The truth is yesterday I nearly made it here but due to some circumstances I got late... isn't Fana angry?

-...well, did you worry about that?

The cowardice of the giant was so amusing. She had to put her hand in the mouth not to laugh. It looked like he needed some encouragement as well.

-If you have time to say such trivial things, quickly go to her. Sofia had been waiting for her dad.

-Haa...

The giant still looked a little anxious but with a little stimulus he finally decided. Some

way or another his legs brought him to the aimed door. But he seemed to be unable to knock the door.

-...it's okay father Garcia.

Said the head nurse behind the hesitating giant with a cheerful voice.

-There's no parent in this world who hates his children.

-...

-With a bitter smile the wretched giant returned the nod. Finally seeming to have decided he beat the door.

-...papa?

Altogether with the soft children's voice, some light footsteps advanced towards the door.

ROMAN HOLIDAY (END)

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